

MINUTES
HOUSING TASK FORCE
JUNE 29, 2006

ROLL CALL:

Joanne Boulton
Nicki Herrington
Andrea Dallas Maddox
Morris Sterneck
David Hoffmann
Joan Gallagher
Alex Berger III, Aldermanic Representative
Michelle Harris, Aldermanic Representative

Absent:

Jack Hambene

City Staff:

Catherine Powers, Director of Planning & Development Services
Jackie Williams, Recording Secretary

Guests:

Mayor Ben Uchitelle
City Manager Michael A. Schoedel
George Hettich, property owner

Catherine Powers welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Housing Task Force. She asked that each member introduce themselves, provide a brief explanation of their interest in this committee and any concerns or issues they may have.

Alex Berger III introduced himself as one of the Ward III Aldermen.

George Hettich indicated his position on this committee is currently in question as he recently moved from the DeMun neighborhood out of the City, but is still a Clayton property owner.

Dave Hoffmann indicated he lives on Crestwood. He stated his interest in serving in this capacity is a result from some issues raised during the recent Aldermanic election.

Morris Sterneck indicated he lives in the Claytonian on Hanley Road and was recommended to serve on this committee by Alderman Lichtenfeld. He stated he feels this will be an important committee and is happy to serve.

Michelle Harris introduced herself as a Ward II Alderman. She indicated her desire to serve on this committee to help maintain quality housing in Clayton and to encourage young individuals to move to Clayton to support our wonderful school district.

Andrea Maddox Dallas introduced herself as a 6 year resident of Ward 1. She stated she was happy to be asked to serve on this committee as she has concerns with regard to new development.

Joanne Boulton introduced herself as a 5 year resident of Clayton. She stated she is interested in maintaining Clayton's housing stock and is very surprised that Clayton does not require occupancy permits for houses. She stated she is also interested in historic preservation.

Nicki Herrington introduced herself as a 20 year resident of Clayton and a 23 year real estate agent. She stated she is familiar with occupancy permits and housing stock and has a vested interest in this venture.

Joan Gallagher arrived late and proceeded to introduce herself.

Mike Schoedel introduced himself as the City Manager.

Mayor Uchitelle indicated he has lived in Clayton for many years. He stated he believes this committee has many housing issues and challenges to undertake and is glad to see that this task force has been initiated.

Catherine Powers indicated that it may be better to elect a chairman at a future meeting. She asked that the City's current policies be discussed and that the members' research requests be discussed for future meetings.

Nicki Herrington asked why this task force was initiated.

Mayor Uchitelle indicated that the Aldermen have recently discussed housing issues and that the City formerly had a Housing Council. He stated issues such as condominium conversions, sale and leased properties as well as redevelopment were issues that need discussion.

Catherine Powers indicated that the Housing Council that was in place during the early to mid 90's was a very important committee in that it made changes to policies, changes to inspection procedures as well as recommended the adoption of the BOCA Property Maintenance Code, which was the first time a national code was in place in Clayton. She stated that since the adoption of the first property maintenance code, the former Housing Council conducted a complete review of each subsequent code and made amendments to the Codes, as written, as was deemed necessary for Clayton.

Catherine Powers provided a brief summary of the Planning Department staff.

Morris Sterneck asked if St. Louis County performs any of Clayton's inspections.

Catherine Powers stated that Clayton conducts all inspections, except for electrical, which is contracted with St. Louis County. She stated for cost reasons, it is not feasible for Clayton to conduct its own electrical inspections. She stated all the inspectors are International Code Council (ICC) Certified for the types of inspections each performs. She explained that aside from inspections, the department also performs plan review and issues permits. She indicated that the Fire Department conducts fire code inspections for commercial tenancies in conjunction with the Planning Department's tenancy inspection.

Morris Sterneck asked what types of inspections are performed on condominium buildings.

Catherine Powers explained that annual property maintenance inspections are conducted on condominium buildings which consists of inspecting the common areas and building's exterior. She stated that occupancy permits and occupancy inspections are no longer required for condominium units.

Catherine Powers noted the data sheet, which gives an idea of how many inspections are conducted annually. She stated this sheet provides estimates only and that it is difficult to determine how many complaint inspections are conducted, although several are conducted. She stated that about 10% of complaint inspections result in a court case being filed.

Andrea Maddox Dallas asked what the Planning Division role is with regard to housing.

Catherine Powers stated that the Planning Division conducts site plan review, zoning administration, performs long-term studies, conducts research, and acts as liaison to the Plan Commission. She stated the building and planning divisions are very closely interrelated, so everything from initial plan proposal to final inspection is conducted in one department.

Andrea Maddox Dallas asked what residential buildings are subject to occupancy inspections and permits.

Catherine Powers indicated that occupancy inspections and permits are required for all residential tenant buildings containing 3 or more units (except condominiums).

George Hettich asked what percent of Clayton's housing stock is rental.

Catherine Powers replied between 40 and 45%. She reminded everyone that condominiums are not subject to the occupancy inspection and/or permit requirement.

A brief discussion regarding Urban Design Districts (UDDs) ensued. Mike Schoedel indicated that the UDD Standards provide more stringent design criteria for the subject areas and advised the members that currently, Clayton has six (6) UDDs.

Catherine Powers stated that redevelopment pressure or the strong possibility of new development initiated these UDDs. These Standards were requested by the property owners within the Districts. The current UDD areas are: Clayton Gardens, Topton/Brighton, Clayshire, Westwood Corridor, the former CBC site and Clayton Road from Big Bend to the east City limits.

Andrea Maddox Dallas asked why all of Clayton is not designated as a UDD.

Catherine Powers indicated that design criteria are still in place (ARB Guidelines) for the entire city.

Mayor Uchitelle asked if the following statistics are available: number of rental units, number of condominium units, number of single family homes, number of duplexes and number of apartment units.

Catherine Powers stated that some of that information would be difficult to determine. However, staff will attempt to extrapolate the requested information for census data, condominium conversions and other sources.

A brief discussion regarding apartment buildings being converted to condominiums ensued. Catherine Powers stated that the number of occupancy permit inspections have reduced over the years as a result of condominium conversions. The correlation between condominium conversions and affordable housing was discussed. Nicki Herrington indicated that affordable housing has been an ongoing issue.

Mayor Uchitelle indicated that the actual number of Clayton residents that attend Clayton's school district is low. He asked if statistical information can be obtained from the school district for presentation at a future meeting. Mike Schoedel indicated that the school district has a demographical person employed by them and asked if Catherine would contact this individual to see if he/she would be willing to make a presentation to this task force. Mayor Uchitelle indicated that there are probably a number of children who reside in Clayton that attend private schools.

Michelle Harris asked what residential properties/units are being sold for and the length of time on the market.

Nicki Herrington indicated she could provide that information.

The subject of affordable housing ensued. The members asked for demographical information. Catherine Powers indicated that the census data can provide that information.

A discussion regarding what draws people to Clayton began. The question of whether the school district is a major determining factor was brought up. Andrea Maddox Dallas indicated that Clayton provides a sense of security and safety. She stated that Clayton also has strong community involvement. Mike Schoedel stated that Clayton also offers more services than other cities.

Mayor Uchitelle indicated that only three (3) of the City's 180 employees reside in Clayton. David Hoffmann asked if incentives could be offered to City employees to entice them to send their children to a Clayton school.

The following will be future topics of discussion: affordable housing.

Mayor Uchitelle asked that real estate agents address this group on current housing and asked that all members drive through the 7500 blocks of the Moorlands and note the tremendous number of “for rent” and “for sale” signs, which is a concern of his.

George Hettich informed the members that he can provide rental market information.

Mayor Uchitelle reminded the members that there has not been a “housing” group for many years and that new issues arise.

Other items of consideration for this task force include preservation of existing housing stock, expansion of the housing inspection program, historic preservation. Some members asked that historic preservation be thoroughly explored.

The members were invited to e-mail or phone Catherine Powers if any additional research is desired or any questions arise after this meeting adjourns.

A list of the task force members will be provided to each member.

Possible meeting dates were discussed and Wednesdays seemed to be the best day.

A chairman will be elected at the next meeting.

Being no further discussion at this time, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.

Recording Secretary